

Mendocino Council of Governments

Approved MINUTES
Monday, April 7, 2003
Ukiah City Council Chambers

The Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) meets as the Board of Directors of:
Mendocino Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and
Mendocino County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)

1. Call to Order / Roll Call . The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. with Directors Willis (PAC), McEntire, Shoemaker, Dahlhoff, Gjerde, and Campbell present; Chair Campbell presiding. Directors Larson and Wharff were absent by prearrangement on City and County business.

Staff present: Phil Dow, Executive Director and Janet Orth, Deputy-Administration.

2. Convene as RTPA

3. Recess as RTPA - Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee.

4. Consent Calendar. Upon motion by Dahlhoff, seconded by Shoemaker, and carried unanimously (*6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved:

4. Approval of March 3, 2003 Minutes – as written

Public Expression. None.

5 - 8. Regular Calendar.

5. Public Hearing: Adoption of Resolution Approving Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Grant Program Regional Priority List

- a. Staff Report. Dow stated that his Assistant Planner who would have reported on this item was in Sacramento this week to attend a transportation planning academy sponsored and paid for by Caltrans, even to the extent of some travel expenses. He then described the grant program, of which this is an annual cycle. The California Transportation Commission will review recommendations on the competing applications submitted by nonprofits, scored and ranked by regional review committees. A public hearing was required for today's action. This year was conducted slightly differently by MCOG, such that the usual Local Review Committee, i.e. MCOG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), delegated the review and ranking responsibility to a subcommittee.
- b. Public Hearing. The Chair opened the hearing at 1:38 p.m. With none present to speak to the issue, the hearing was closed at 1:39 p.m.
- c. Board Action. **Upon motion** by Shoemaker, seconded by McEntire, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*6 Ayes – Willis/PAC, McEntire, Shoemaker, Dahlhoff, Gjerde, and Campbell; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Larson and Wharff*): IT IS ORDERED that the following resolution is adopted.

Resolution No. M2003-05
Approving FTA Section 5310 Grant Program
Regional Priority List
(Reso. #M2003-05 is incorporated herein by reference)

6. Adoption of Final 2001 Mendocino County Regional Transportation Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report – *continued from March 3, 2003*. Dow cited his written staff report, that the consultant had not yet completed the final EIR, which was delayed not by the volume and complexity of the comments, but rather that the consultant's vacation coincided with the EIR schedule. The issue was agendaized today in order to take action to continue to the next meeting and thereby avoid renoticing the issue. He noted no comments were received from any agency by the State Clearinghouse. Also, no individual public comments were received from any area of the county except Willits.

Chair Campbell invited Steve Turner, Transportation Director, Ukiah Unified School District, to speak. He stated the cost to schools to provide transportation and his opinion that while not required, school transportation should be included in the RTP, and referred to his written comments submitted to MCOG (included in the meeting materials). He appreciated that Dow offered to consider his concerns in the next RTP cycle.

Upon motion by Gjerde, seconded by Willis, and carried unanimously (*6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that this agenda item is continued to May 5, 2003.

7. Executive Committee Reports & Recommendations. Staff reported that the Executive Committee had met and recommended a draft budget.

- a. Acceptance of February 24, 2003 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes. **Upon motion** by Shoemaker, seconded by Dahlhoff, and carried unanimously (*6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the meeting minutes of February 24, 2003 are accepted as written.
- b. Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2003/04 RTPA Budget. Orth pointed out revisions made by staff and other committees since then. First was an increase of \$12,462 to the Planning Overall Work Program budget, not affecting the Local Transportation Fund (LTF), as recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee. The Planning staff in charge of the work program was not present to provide the reasons for the increase, which affected two of the work elements. Orth explained that some of the funding sources are kept in MCOG's local accounts to spread over multiple years and may be carried over or shifted between projects.

The second change to the budget resulted from the fiscal audit of Mendocino Transit Authority, causing \$28,068 to be returned to MCOG and added to revenues for allocation in FY 2003/04. Chair Campbell asked staff to continue to report to the Board any revisions as they are made during the budget process.

No action was taken, as the item was advisory only, until June budget allocations.

8. Transit Productivity Committee (TPC) Recommendations

- a. Acceptance of March 24, 2003 TPC Meeting Minutes.
- b. Fiscal Year 2003/04 Unmet Transit Needs Recommendation. The TPC recommended a finding that "there were no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet" for funding in the 2003/04 transit claim. Staff advised no action until the June budget allocations.
- c. Annual Review of MTA Performance Reports Against MCOG Standards. Orth explained that last year's TPC work simplified the process of updating two of the four standards by the

rate of inflation. As directed, staff made the adjustment according to the most recent rate published by the Consumer Price Index, which came to 2.42%. The Board was asked to formally approve the updated standards as part of the transit performance report.

The TPC reported that Mendocino Transit Authority's performance over the past year was acceptable, meeting two of three standards or better for each service type, and that MTA's services are performing well overall.

Upon motion by McEntire, seconded by Dahlhoff, and carried unanimously (*6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the TPC meeting minutes of March 24, 2003 are accepted as written, the updated Transit Performance Standards are approved, and the TPC's annual report of transit performance is accepted.

9. Reports – Information

- a. Mendocino Transit Authority. Bruce Richard reported that the new public health facility in Ukiah is now being served by MTA.
- b. North Coast Railroad Authority. Executive Director Doug Christy reported that, because of a Public Utilities Commission issue with board members, the officers had temporarily resigned and were reinstated. Currently NCRA's main funding source is the remainder of \$60 million previously allocated by the State, under State control as part of the Traffic Congestion Relief Program. The second major source is Federal, at approximately \$8.3 million, consisting of part Office of Emergency Services (OES) and part Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds. Release of funds is pending a survey report, on which NCRA is working aggressively; also federal agencies are working to loosen regulations so that NCRA can more easily claim the funds. Other efforts include work with shipping companies, work with officials involved with California Western Railroad's bankruptcy, and attempts to make the south end of the rail line able to sustain itself.

Director Campbell asked about shipping of aggregates materials, concerning speed and weight issues with rail transport. Director McEntire asked about endeavors to move freight from Fort Bragg, and which commodities were feasible. Mr. Christy replied that lumber is the main item as rail is a more economical method of freight than trucking for local companies. NCRA is encouraged by interest expressed by a Fort Bragg company that plans to move a large quantity of logs by rail.

- c. MCOG Administration & Planning Staff
 1. *Summary of Meetings*. Dow referred to his written staff report.
 2. *State Budget Update*. Dow asked whether any of the directors had news. Director Shoemaker reported on recent meetings of California State Association of Counties (CSAC) in Sacramento concerning legislative matters. He noted an abundance of new bills in the absence of funds to legislate.
 3. *2004 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*. Dow reported the unexpected good news that there might be new funds in the 2004 STIP, from federal sources. He also had heard that the six-year TEA (transportation) reauthorization bill would definitely be enacted by Congress this year. In the 2002 STIP, MCOG received about \$18 million; however, only a fraction of that amount is expected for 2004. As the fund estimate has been delayed, Dow expected the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) would also be delayed. He asked the directors to begin thinking about MCOG's policy concerning its regional distribution of funds by transportation mode for the next cycle of programming.

Discussion followed on preparing lists of potential top priority projects. Director Gjerde noted the “smart growth” system of incentives and rewards used by Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), by which a portion of transportation funds are prioritized for localities that provide housing near transit facilities. Chair Campbell responded to the jobs-housing issue, noting the ABAG program was innovative and their pilot projects were worth looking at, while evaluating existing policies. Rail grade crossings were discussed. Dow confirmed that all remaining rail grade projects have been funded by MCOG, so the ten percent rail mode share needs to be reconsidered in terms of finding eligible projects.

4. *Local Transportation Sales Tax Initiatives.* Lake County is now waiting until the November election to place their initiatives on the ballot, rather than a special election this spring. Dow reported polling results, showing that support was strong even without any marketing or education, but fell just short of the support needed to pass the ballot. The pollsters recommended taking more time to promote the initiative for a better chance of success.
5. *Miscellaneous.* Dow handed out the Tranny award results, noting that Mendocino County Department of Transportation won an award for their annual Road System Traffic Safety Review, which is funded by MCOG’s planning work program. He commended the department for doing an increasingly good job with this program. Awards would be given in the annual ceremony conducted by the California Transportation Foundation.

Dow stated the Willits Bypass Project Development Team would meet April 10, and he expected the meeting to be “intense.” Issues to be discussed would be selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) and local community concerns versus the requirements of federal resource agencies that grant permits for the highway bypass.

Dow reported he would meet in Sacramento on April 8 with Assemblymember Patty Berg and other regional transportation agency executives from Assembly District 1.

- d. MCOG Directors. Director Willis (Caltrans) reported that a Hopland Bypass newsletter is available. Director Shoemaker asked her about Route 20 improvements that still need work, as new pavement is already degrading. Director McEntire also mentioned Highway 101 north of Willits, concerning Caltrans’ progress on chip seal maintenance. Willis thought the 101 work to date was preparation for further improvements, and more work remains to be done.

Chair Campbell reported on her trip in March to the National Association of Counties (NACO) meeting in Washington, D.C. Transportation issues were included on the agenda. She noted that rural leadership issues have not disappeared after all the hard work, and she hoped it would hold. She also reported the upcoming California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) annual forum on April 10 and 11 in Monterey. At that meeting, she and Dow would “pass the gavel” to the next CALCOG Chair and Chair of the COG Directors Association respectively, as their one-year terms expire.

Director Dahlhoff reported the first reading of Point Arena’s local transportation sales tax draft ordinance. Dow noted work in the legislature to promote lowering of the threshold for ballot passage of such initiatives, although he did not expect action this year. Chair Campbell discussed County Counsel’s analysis of countywide sales tax authority versus local city or county ordinances, which did not favor the County.

Director Gjerde reported the City of Fort Bragg and local banks granted a loan of \$125,000 to California Western Railroad to assist with continuing operations, while CWR seeks a buyer. He also reported that the City has requested \$350,000 of TEA priority

demonstration funds through Congressman Thompson, for their downtown street improvements.

- 10. a. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee - Reconvene as RTPA - Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee.** Upon motion by Dahlhoff, seconded by Shoemaker, and carried unanimously (*5 Ayes; 0 Noes; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.
- b. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Submitted: PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Administrator